THE MEANING OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM OF INSTRUMENT OF ADAPTATION TO THE PROCESS OF HUMANIZATION: CONTRIBUTIONS OF FREIRIAN THOUGHT

O SENTIDO DO CONHECIMENTO NO CURRÍCULO ESCOLAR DE INSTRUMENTO DE ADAPTAÇÃO AO PROCESSO DE HUMANIZAÇÃO: CONTRIBUIÇÕES DO PENSAMENTO FREIRIANO

EL SIGNIFICADO DEL CONOCIMIENTO EN EL CURRÍCULO ESCOLAR DE INSTRUMENTO DE ADAPTACIÓN AL PROCESO DE HUMANIZACIÓN: APORTES DEL PENSAMIENTO FREIRIANO

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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the dimensions and less evident meanings of knowledge that is foreseen for the Brazilian public school by current curricular reforms. Although the management of this knowledge made in the school seems obvious, given the veracity of the diagnosis, the analysis of how this process is effective does not seem clear. The theoretical discussions undertaken in the investigation result from bibliographic research of historical-dialectical character, carried out from the reading of legal documents and literature that discusses curricular policies of basic education in Brazil. The results indicate that school knowledge acts as a mechanism for controlling and adapting students to the new market order of work, marked by the imperatives of capital. In the contrapart of this proposal, we discuss, in the light of Freirian thought, the urgency of socialization of knowledge in the school curriculum as a social force of liberation at the service of the humanization process, with a view to overcoming socioeducational inequality.


RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza las dimensiones y significados menos evidentes del conocimiento que se prevé para la escuela pública brasileña por las reformas curriculares actuales. Aunque la gestión de este conocimiento realizada en la escuela parezca obvia, dada la veracidad del diagnóstico, el análisis de cómo se lleva a cabo este proceso no parece claro. Las discusiones teóricas realizadas en la investigación resultan de investigaciones bibliográficas de carácter histórico-dialéctico, realizadas a partir de la lectura de documentos jurídicos y literatura que discute las políticas curriculares de la educación básica en Brasil. Los resultados indican que el conocimiento escolar actúa como un mecanismo de control y adaptación de los estudiantes al nuevo orden de trabajo del mercado, marcado por los imperativos del capital. En la contraparte de esta propuesta, discutimos, a la luz del pensamiento Freiriano, la urgencia de la socialización del conocimiento en el currículo escolar como fuerza social de liberación al servicio del proceso de humanización, con miras a superar la desigualdad socioeducativa.


Introduction

Critics of neoliberal educational policies claim that one of the central characteristics of the curricular reforms that restructure Brazilian education is the implementation of a progressive process of destitution of the ontological dimension of school education. In other words, there is a process of erosion of students' education, with regard to their humanization, which occurs from the socialization of knowledge programmed for teaching and learning, present at the base of the national guidelines of basic education. The reproduction of this project by the school and its consequences in the students' lives seems an obvious question: the types of content and their forms of socialization, given by teaching practices, deny the right to an education of human development, which deepens the historical reality of social inequality. However, despite the veracity of the diagnosis, the analysis of this phenomenon is not presented in a clear and transparent way.

It is necessary to explain that a historical problem refers to the inability of the school to mean, for the subjects who attend and work there, everything that is expected of it. We refer to its idealization, that is, its logic of institutional organization, to the ways of thinking and acting of its subjects, elements that represent inseparable realities. The idealization in which the school is involved is not a misunderstanding of thought, but an intentionally
produced dysfunction, which is due both to the market culture, which focuses on it as programmable productivity, and to the possibilities of the culture of citizenship, which present themselves as a teachable virtue. For there to be any change in its practices, and also for the school institution to be able to analyze the consequences of this dysfunction it produces, it is necessary to be clear about the conceptual framework that supports the understanding of the foundations of curricular knowledge, which are socialized by the school and attribute meanings to it.

Regarding methodology, this research, of a bibliographical nature (GIL, 2008; PÁDUA, 2007) and related to the historical-dialectic perspective, was carried out from the critical reading of legal documents that regulate and standardize curricular policies for basic education, among which we highlight the Common National Curricular Base (BRASIL, 2017) and the Common National Base for Basic Education Teacher Formation (BRASIL, 2019). In addition, we also dedicate a reading on the foundations of knowledge, which we do based on the literature that criticizes the tendency towards pedagogical pragmatism in Brazil (CASALI, 2011; FRIGOTTO, 2006; GENTILI; SILVA, 1996; LAVAL, 2019; NEVES; PRONKO, 2008), as well as, fundamentally, the writings of Paulo Freire that deal with the fundamentals of humanizing education.

In this sense, the aim of this article is, on the one hand, to analyze some of the less obvious dimensions of the meanings of knowledge programmed by the neoliberal capitalist education project, which is implemented by educational reforms for Brazilian public schools. On the other hand, it seeks to point out the meanings of knowledge in a critical sense, which is placed at the service of the humanization process, as a way of producing a different thought, capable of evaluating the management of a specific type of school knowledge, which is, the one necessary to overcome the analytical and political limitations of an interpretation of knowledge, an interpretation that is reduced to a question of economic development, linked to issues of employability. In this sense, it is also sought to define different paths in the execution of educational policies and practices, capable of guiding them against the grain of neoliberal ideas. This text comprises, in addition to this introduction, three sections: the first discusses the current school context, in which the school is challenged to promote compulsory education; the subsequent section presents school knowledge in the curriculum as a production factor in the capitalist instrumental logic; and, after that, the article brings a section that addresses school knowledge in the curriculum at the service of the humanization process. Finally, the final considerations follow.
The current context in which the school is challenged to promote compulsory education

Statistical data from the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira, linked to the Ministry of Education (BRASIL, 2021) show that, in Maranhão, there are high rates of educational inequality, which range from the literacy stage to high school, both regarding issues of illiteracy, as well as reading and writing deficits and the low schooling rates of the school-age population. In eastern Maranhão, which is made up of 44 municipalities and which borders the State of Piauí, this problem, when observed at the municipal level, can be even greater, whether in terms of problems of school exclusion, or in terms of difficulties in teaching and learning, both produced in the last two years, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is evident that this process of educational inequality tends to increase even more with the changes brought about by the continued productive restructuring of capital, which takes place under the hegemony of financial capital and under the materialization of neoliberalism, phenomena whose political form meets the determinants of the counterrevolution bourgeoisie occurred at national and international level. In view of this, the possibility of increasing educational inequality occurs because, in Brazil, new determinations of the world of work are advancing (ALVES, 2010), which develops worldwide within a new technological and scientific revolution, which affects the production of goods (ANTUNES, 2020). Among these determinations, with the introduction of the informational-digital universe, new meanings of work emerge that structure capital in a disruptive way for humanity. The consequences of this reality, in this troubled 21st century, promote an increase in uncertainty, complexity, instability and insecurity of life in society, challenging us to build a new way of life, based on a new world of work.

Studies by Laval (2019) emphasize that school education advances towards this model that has been imposing itself, which is based on subjection to economic reason and whose axiom is that school institutions only have meaning and quality in providing services to the demands of work with a view to economic and social development. It is about neoliberal school education, cultivated as a private good and of economic value to be acquired by the individuals themselves, by their own will and by the capitalization of private resources. Thus, the school is seen as a market investment in relation to the development of technologies and information, and the sense of socialization of knowledge turns to the processes of individualization of the relationship with knowledge, adapting to the demands and to the fluidity of responses to market demands and thus assuming the model of an educating
company (LAVAL, 2019). In this sense, in addition to the signs of this growing “privatization” phenomenon on the school – among which, the development of information technologies in the processes of individualization of the relationship with knowledge and the generalized pedagogization of social relations –, it is also necessary, fundamentally, highlight the effect of this event on the meaning of school knowledge that institutions socialize.

The analysis of the multiplicity of aspects in which the school is called upon to socialize knowledge allows us to observe it not only as a consumer good that supports the material production demanded by the market, but as an instrument of social transformation, with possibilities to make the right to education an effective opportunity for most of the popular classes that attend school. For this reason, it is essential to admit that:

a) There is public recognition of the need for democratization, which means much more than offering vacancies and creating objective conditions for the student population to remain in school. This public statement focuses on the quality of teaching and learning and is based on the understanding both that it is necessary to democratize school scientific knowledge and that this must be done through institutional policies, in their forms of socialization, of monitoring and evaluation with social quality.

b) If it is the population that sustains the public school, then, for ethical reasons, it has a greater social commitment to the knowledge it socializes. In this case, democratization is achieved by understanding knowledge guided by the ethics of the common good, and not just by the personal fulfillment of students. Thus, the relationship between public school and society is a relationship of political effort to overcome educational inequalities that are reproduced and maintained in the social structure.

Despite this evidence, there are currently two factors aimed at curbing these perceptions, recognized by the population, that it is necessary to democratize access to school knowledge, that is, to take the process of appropriating historically accumulated knowledge in view of its learning and of human development.

The first factor that contributes to blocking the democratization of school knowledge is the trend, which is under way, of the formation of a “new” man, as happened in the past, in the 1930s, 1950s and in 1964, in amid the strong processes of industrialization and internationalization of the Brazilian economy. It is a new moral and intellectual reform, aimed at a “worker” in the long term, which adapts to the requirements, demands and expectations of the socioeconomic order established worldwide. To this end, an inter-corporate pact was recently signed between the State, political elites and the business sector, linked to a global education project based on curricular reforms, such as the National Common Curricular Base.
(BRASIL, 2017) and the National Common Base of Basic Education Teacher Formation (BRASIL, 2019), which express an ideology of competition, flexibility, efficiency and market productivity.

The major concern committed to this inter-corporate pact with school formation is to raise the schooling rates of workers and the quality of their education, evidencing the recognition of the economic value of education (SCHULTZ, 1971), a strictly instrumental value, that is, the idea that “[…] better formed workers increase the probability of greater productivity and business performance” (CASALI, 2011, p. 2, our translation).

The second factor is the development, in the educational actions of the capitalist project of neoliberal education, of a fragmented management of school systems, aimed at improving the quality of teaching, whose program includes the instrumental formation of school leaders, in an approach that comprises, as managers, the teacher education policy, in addition to the pedagogical project and curricular practices. Without a doubt, these actions are based on the theory of human capital, which supports the neoliberal conception of the relationship between school education and society (FRIGOTTO, 2006; SCHULTZ, 1971), and on the pedagogy of competences, which includes the pedagogical dimension of the educational-curricular project. The seriousness of the theory of human capital is that it imprints its productivist character on school education and, in the case of the pedagogy of competences, by subtracting the theoretical and historically accumulated knowledge produced, and overvaluing the technical dimension of experiential doing, it subtracts from the human formation, indispensable tools for autonomous critical thinking and acting (NEVES; PRONKO, 2008).

In this way, thanks to the combination of these two factors, a meaning of school knowledge is produced as a production factor, marked by an instrumental economicist conception that, far from expanding human development, restricts the boundaries of this process as a right and a historical necessity. In opposition to the logic of knowledge as a production factor, that is, a workforce reduced to indispensable skills for future employability, another conception of school knowledge, linked to the critical perspective of humanization, requires awareness and development in school curricula, so that they are aimed at forming a new collective man and a culture in which political awareness goes beyond the limits of economic-corporate interests, within the framework of capitalism with social justice.
School knowledge in the curriculum as a production factor in the capitalist instrumental logic

It is nothing new that, in Brazil, a new educational order, placed at the service of the economy, has been gradually imposing itself, through curricular reforms, and assuming an ideology of competition, flexibility, efficiency and market productivity, founded on an intercorporate pact between the State, political elites and the business sector, linked to a global education project.

In this sense, both the Common National Curricular Base (BRASIL, 2017) and the Common National Base for Basic Education Teacher Formation (BRASIL, 2019), each in its own way, express this agreement between such “actors”, in the sense of guide Brazilian schools in offering an efficient and productive knowledge policy, consistent with the demands required by the new standards of competition in the national and world market.

What draws the most attention, with regard to this way of seeing, is the fundamental character of this new educational pact, since it is aimed at the extreme appreciation of running the school at the service of the economy and has its guidance oriented, on the one hand, by the ideals of market competition between social and educational systems and, on the other, by adapting to the social and subjective conditions of economic mobilization.

In this scenario, the understanding of what quality is in the business field has an influence on education and, consequently, on the knowledge that the school socializes. In this case, knowledge starts to be seen as an instrument for inserting, innovating and adapting subjects to the developing socioeconomic reality. The quality of this process assumes, therefore, a logic of the need to devise strategies for greater and better adaptability, productivity and competitiveness in an increasingly diversified and differentiated market. The entrepreneurial euphoria for this logic of quality, derived from such transformations, has as a regulatory element, the “[...] need to ensure favorable mechanisms of adaptability, adjustment and accommodation to a changing market” (GENTILI; SILVA, 1996, p. 132, our translation).

The application of these principles of quality with economic value of education in educational policies brought several problems and new challenges to school systems and the teachers who work in them. Among these problems, the school's loss of autonomy in knowledge management stands out, being obliged to redefine itself in order to respond to the competitive and market society, which is increasingly diverse, local and plural. In addition, teaching became centered on learning outcomes, taken as a measure of the school's productive quality. With regard to this productive character, it, in turn, depends on the quality of teacher formation, which, currently, has been reduced to formation of professional skills and abilities.
for the exercise of a pedagogical practice, an activity that must respond to regulatory processes of the curriculum, referenced by the National Common Curricular Base (BRASIL, 2017) and in association with the classifications of the national and international evaluation systems.

The most acute challenges of this reality involve dispelling the myths of rights and learning objectives, established by the National Common Curricular Base (BRASIL, 2017), which are linked to attributing the value of educational knowledge to the development of skills and abilities. The teaching of competences and skills through mere student learning, combined in a unified matrix, is much more conducive to the reproduction of society, since it is confused with the offer of educational processes that are limited to preparing individuals to orientate themselves in the world, conforming them to real life, than to the educational processes of emancipation, that is, those that propose to socialize subjects in society, aiming to go beyond the necessary adaptation and creating conditions for them to know how to think for themselves, as subjects with autonomy and aptitude for the transformation of society, in its conditions and its established social structures (OLIVEIRA, 2014).

In fact, with this false relationship between teaching and learning processes, mediated by the instrumental knowledge present in the school curriculum and derived from the National Common Curricular Base (BRASIL, 2017), students become “subjects” of adaptation to the world, which It takes place from two perspectives, which unfold and become predominant today: students are seen as recipients of information and “communications” and as productive consumers of the labor market economy. Regarding the bias linked to being recipients or depositories of knowledge, it derives from the conception of education as an act of depositing, of transferring values and knowledge, which Freire (1987) called “banking” education, in which the student's conscience is a passive “piece” in relation to knowledge, waiting for him to enter it. When dealing with this idea, Freire (1987, p. 63, our translation) says that “[...] students have no role other than that of discipline and imitating the world. It is to fill students with content. It is to make deposits and communications – false knowledge – which he considers as true knowledge”.

The view of students as productive consumers for the economy is predominantly centered on the conception of school education from an “efficientist” perspective, effective and of excellence, based on the principle of functionality of the capitalist society that aims at school education for future employment. Learning and developing means getting ready to participate in globalization (ARROYO, 2011; KEMMIS; PETER; SUGGET, 2007), aspiring to the production, consumption, measurement and vocationalism of their future professions.
(KEMMIS; PETER; SUGGET, 2007), develop capabilities for granting opportunities and for meritocratic selection, according to the division of labor in society. Associated with consumerism and competition, a characteristic of this school education model is to attribute to students the role of catalysts of knowledge, as a symbol of human happiness, towards job prosperity, even if illusory.

On what rationality is this view of knowledge based? Knowledge, under the logic of instrumentalization for formation, is manifested by the primacy of form over content, in the context of positive reason, that is, “[...] in the technical process, in the operation, in applied knowledge” (PUCCI, 1994, p. 24, our translation). It is a reason that is based on the exchange of equivalents in the world of goods, and its parameter for evaluating knowledge is its functionality, precision and uniqueness.

In this perspective, Cardoso and Elias (2005) state that knowledge has become a commodity that gives value to another commodity: school education, whose instrumental, objective and mercantile nature of formation can be identified through the attempt to operationalize the most varied concepts, corresponding, including, to the calculated implementation of the expected results of schooling.

This instrumental perspective of “social realization of thought”, according to Adorno (2010), causes the subject to lose the quality of reflecting on himself, limiting himself to learning the factual and the isolated, creating the necessary conditions for the shadow to of the knowledge of the semi-formation settles down. We deal, therefore, with a knowledge that, dissociated from social practice, demarcates objectives, goals and prescriptive disciplinary purposes. It is shaped by the founding clarification of modern sciences that reinforces the mechanisms that generate adaptation and domination, sedimentors of ways of learning through repetition, memorization and reproduction of other people's ideas.

In this way, the curriculum, when based on a vision of culture as something fixed and stable, takes knowledge as data, as a fact and as a set of information to be passed on to generations, whose methods of teaching and learning are shaped by repetition and by memorization. The learning object, in this perspective, takes place in fragmented knowledge such as techniques (GÍMENO-SACRISTÁN, 2002).

It is a rationality that, being positivist in origin, acts in education through objectivity, strongly influenced by mathematical logic, in which everything is predictable, measured and controlled in order to obtain better results. In this case, the school is defined as a place par excellence for the reproduction of models, where the contents are presented to the students as ready and finished. It is up to them to repeat and reproduce the model of useful and necessary
attitudes, skills and competences for them to integrate into the social machine, in a receptive and passive way, through expository classes and evaluated from the perspective of a product, regulated in two moments: previous evaluation, so that prerequisites are established, and assessment of students in relation to what was proposed in the instructional or operational objectives (HADJI, 2001; KEMMIS; PETER; SUGGET, 2007; GIROUX, 1986).

In this theoretical perspective, according to Giroux (1986), only what can be observed is considered knowledge, so that other forms that cannot be universalized are excluded and considered as merely speculative wisdom. It is linear knowledge, produced free of values, and which, therefore, must be “objective and described in a neutral way” (GIROUX, 1986, p. 232, our translation), and can be transformed into “hard data”. Consequently, academic knowledge compartmentalized in the form of disciplines is privileged in teaching, ignoring the learning of attitudes, values, procedures, as facets of personality.

For Arroyo (2011), the cult and belief in science, technology and scientific rationality as saviors and liberators have sacralized knowledge, subjecting it to segregating standards, making it elitist, excluding and controlling, as a guarantee of progress and of universal well-being. It follows that, in social, political and economic culture, as well as in the media and at work, these beliefs are hegemonic and advance with the scientific revolution, putting and imposing pressure on schools and their professionals to be faithful and competent guardians of these sacred traits of sacralized contents. In the perpetuation of these redeeming beliefs of science, according to Arroyo (2011, p. 49, our translation),

We are in a political and economic game in which hegemonic knowledge, science and technology have been appropriated and placed at the service of accumulation and maintenance of relations of domination and subordination. The production, accumulation and appropriation, transmission and learning of this knowledge are subject to this political relationship. [...] The sacralization of the rites of passage that are so selective and segregating are imposed on the school and teaching by the persistence of rituals and segregating relationships in society. [...] The field of knowledge was subjected to segregating standards. Lost autonomy. Sacred knowledge becomes elitist, segregating and controlling.

In this perspective, the appropriation of knowledge by students implies a transmission process that takes place above social reality and interpersonal relationships, disregarding its historicity. As such, it aims at the formation of an instrumental and strategic repertoire that enables the finalist-rational action of man, enabling him to achieve success in relation to pre-established goals.
We reiterate that, among the various characteristics that we can visualize in this model of education, there is the view of students as those who, in relation to the teacher and the content to be taught, are seen as those who do not know and who, therefore, must be thought of, disciplined, accommodated, allowed to speak and listen when allowed, as well as what type of knowledge should be said and/or apprehended. It is a process that treats students only as mere objects and whose understanding of teaching and learning can only be achieved through the techniques of repetition, memorization and reproduction of ideas produced by others.

In fact, this perspective of school education based on capitalist ideology, of a neoliberal nature, produces an understanding of competence as a discourse of knowledge that establishes social divisions and exclusions of the subjects of educational action (CHAUÍ, 2014). In this sense, the formation of students produces the classification division of students as competent, those who know, and incompetent, those who do not know and obey – and who end up being expelled from school.

As a result of this instrumental logic of knowledge transmission, learning assessment is reduced to a simple technique, relegating the contexts and characteristics of students to the background. In this sense, Alves (2004) states that evaluation is identified, inevitably, as an external and internal control process, as a mechanism for observing and inspecting this control and for verifying the faithful implementation, use and realization of the formation proposal in the manner as it was formally planned and presented.

The author considers, therefore, that this technical perspective of evaluation in the curriculum of positivist influence is associated with “the ends to be achieved”, translated into performances to be observed in students, at the end of learning, and which guarantee the investment made with instruction. For Alves (2004), in a technical-rational curricular theory, the importance of the processes in making the student learn, the way the teacher teaches from the methods, strategies, techniques, materials and means of evaluation used to guide all activities, according to the desired objectives, are related to a functionalist vision of democracy. Even if it conceives special importance to equal opportunities, this perspective is realized and tends to strengthen meritocracy by taking advantage of individual talents.

Thus conceived, “[...] formation aims at training well-defined skills, translated into formal conduct, and values the image of the teacher as a technician” (ALVES, 2004, p. 39). The act of evaluating becomes equivalent to measurement, to certification, in which tests become instruments of classification, of ascension in the creed of instrumental logic, in the
creed of the rationality of efficiency (HADJI, 2001), whose evaluation instruments par excellence are the paper and pencil tests (ALVES, 2004).

This perspective of bureaucratic and classificatory evaluation is based on the concept of curriculum criticized by Arroyo (2011, p. 46, our translation):

To be competent is to be faithful to this sacred vision of the contents, of its discipline, to take them seriously, to be demanding, to faithfully comply with all processes and rituals. Including the evaluation/approval/failure ritual, sacrificing the diversity of cultures, experiences, learning processes, breaking identities in such a delicate phase of their formation, childhood, adolescence and youth.

Therefore, in this knowledge learning evaluation model, what matters is the result of student performance taken as knowledge, skills and attitudes recognized in socially acceptable and desirable scientific or cultural standards, measured at the end of school periods defined by the education systems, or even by teachers, or even at the end of certain activities. This is an assessment that aims to verify the acquisitions targeted in formation, with a view to issuing or not the “certificate” (HADJI, 2001). It attends much more to the formal and classificatory criteria of learning comparison than to the concrete learning, being excessively concerned with the technical and statistical treatment of the results.

For Saul (2001, p. 16, our translation), one of the characteristics of this evaluative practice is to strengthen the idea that the student's failure in school is attributed exclusively to him, because, in the neoliberal perspective, “[...] those who make an effort will do well; those who do not make an effort, do badly”.

School knowledge in the curriculum at the service of the humanization process

Due to the close link between education and the current capitalist project, we can say that the knowledge selected to be included in the school curriculum represents little, or perhaps nothing, and intends in terms of promoting the formation of consciences and critical actions of the subjects as individual potentialities and collective social intervention. However, this does not mean that the entire corpus of school knowledge is a direct reflection of the ideas of this capitalist ideology. Anyway, at this point, there needs to be a theoretical and political clarification of knowledge in the service of the maximum humanization of individuals.

If we consider formation that has the most elaborate human productions in perspective, what scientific knowledge is important to be taught, also bearing in mind the humanization process? To answer this question, beyond the epistemological dimension, that
is, the act of knowing the real, the object represented or known by the subjects, we dedicate ourselves to the onto-epistemological question, that is, to the critical examination of the veracity of the knowledge that matters for the formation of more human subjects. In this sense, as it is a retroact in an interventionist way in reality, the construction and socialization of this knowledge assumes the political dimension of struggle to overcome concrete educational and social inequalities.

In the light of Freire's writings, without disregarding the instrumental value of school knowledge, we will discuss: What is the nature of the social reality of the object of this type of knowledge? What knowledge is important for human formation? How is school knowledge socialized in the sense of humanization, articulating it with the process of transforming society?

Reflection on what knowledge is and on its importance for human existence is the foundation of an onto-epistemological vision that provides rigor and fruitfulness to think about the school curriculum. The understanding of knowledge from the totality of human life in the world, in Freire's writings, is shown as a counterpoint to traditional dichotomous and fragmented approaches to knowledge, as formulated by modern Western philosophy in its subject-object dualisms.

Knowledge, according to Freire (1987), as a social reality, is also historical, because it is a construction that takes place in historical praxis:

Praxis that, being reflection and action truly transforming reality, is a source of reflective knowledge and creation. And it is as transforming and creative beings that men, in their permanent relations with reality, produce not only material goods, sensible things, objects, but also social institutions, their ideas, their perceptions (FREIRE, 2006, p. 92, our translation).

From this point of view, the understanding of knowledge appears as a cultural production, which is the result of the relationships between material and human realities, understood in their entirety, in a process that takes place from the experience of human beings as transformers of that same concrete reality, in a permanent movement of actions and reflections, which follow one another in order to fulfill both their immediate and historical needs. Thus, knowledge is the set of cultural experiences, both scientific, philosophical and artistic, considering their symbolic richness, through which men and women give meaning to their social practices and, at the same time, form new needs and potentialities, which expand their capabilities, their activities and their relationships with the world.
Starting from the historical conditions of the Brazilian reality, precisely between the 1950s and 1980s, Freire (1987, 2010) denounces that, at the time, the structures of the “society in transition” did not meet the needs of most of the population in terms of basic rights. This reality, experienced by men and women who were oppressed, made it impossible for them to realize their humanity, because, if on the one hand it placed them in a situation of domestication and oppression, on the other hand, education itself served as an instrument of social exclusion and of domestication, practiced by elites and oppressive dominant groups. Opposing this perspective of domesticating education, he suggests the proposal of emancipating education, whose content would need to be constituted by collectively and historically produced knowledge and, therefore, be significant for students in the development of critical thinking about their reality.

According to Freire (2011b, p. 36), if in the task of thinking about the world and communicating what is thought about the world, human beings create their languages, then knowledge “is constituted in man-world relations, relations of transformation, and is perfected in the critical problematization of these relations”. Born from the action of men and women, knowledge is a cultural and historical product, therefore, rightly so, it is inconclusive, it has different levels and modes, and its appropriation is linked to multiple forms of interaction and social and educational organization and to the types of language that expresses it.

Undoubtedly, because it is a fundamental category of the formation of the human being who knows himself, who knows himself and who needs to transform the world, curricular knowledge is essential to individual and social life, precisely because of the capacity it can provide students in what it refers to the expansion of their capabilities and potential in view of their human development, at each level of education. Thus, their socialization in the school context, as the locus of intentional and organized educational practice, determines their characteristics and their social role. Contrary to the perspective of a production factor in the capitalist instrumental logic, in which knowledge is transmitted and reproduced in order to adapt students to life in society, the school knowledge that matters for the education of students is that which presents itself in the sense of humanization, as a right, especially for excluded populations, and which, moreover, is organically linked to the process of transforming society.

While the curricular knowledge socialized by the educational-curricular practice assumes the role of adapting the subjects only to the posed reality, which means “subtracting from man his possibility and his right to transform the world” (FREIRE, 2011b, p. 76, our translation), significant knowledge of humanization is defined as a material and social
instrument/force for transforming and overcoming political reality and social contradictions, the context in which this subject is situated and whose ideological level guides his way of being in the world. This knowledge has the function of making the subjects know how to think for themselves, assuming the authorship of their actions and learning to govern and self-govern, so that they are sovereign.

It is a knowledge that, by its nature and its historical function, fulfills an ethical-political project and has a sense of liberating experience and the promotion of a new way of thinking and acting, in the face of the dominant hegemony of the current society. This conception differs, therefore, from knowledge policies from the perspective of determinism (FREIRE, 2011a, 1987), whose understanding of historical reality is independent of wills, human conditions, political action and idealism, whose production and appropriation of knowledge take place in its elitist form, at the level of “intellectual pedantry” and “sectarianism”.

For this reason, according to Freire (1987), it is knowledge that, potentially transforming, cannot be achieved without an effective, active and purposeful connection with the economic, social, political and cultural reality, a bond that makes it possible for subjects to know it more and better and, in this way, overcome the problems that arise from it. This understanding implies that the production of this knowledge is guided by problems that turn the apprehension of economic and social reality into something formative. In this sense, acquiring a critical and organic aspect, reality becomes less formal, less bureaucratic and more concrete, since its problems arise from the contradictory dynamics of social and concrete relationships in life.

This perspective presupposes, firstly, that there is no construction of knowledge outside a dialectic relationship of reciprocal transformations “man-world-human” (FREIRE, 1987), a process that must also include an understanding of this knowledge, in terms of both its content as well as its form. It derives from this perspective that meaningful school knowledge requires a vital connection between educators and students, their concrete lives and their dreams, situated in the reality in which they live, so that it actually constitutes an instrument of intervention and social transformation. In this way, their actuality in relation to social life is continuously stimulated by the moments of change required by contemporaneity, because they are the product and object of the demand for action and updating in the very cultural and economic evolution of society.

Thus, Freire (2007) warns that knowledge, as awareness of world-reality, as a social practice, cannot be understood and produced in a dichotomous relationship between
objectivity and subjectivity, but in its dialectical unity, because concrete reality is never only
the real data, but it is also the perception we have of it. That said, it is worth understanding
“education as a practice of freedom”, which will take place through the apprehension of
curricular knowledge (a knowable object), “is not just the transfer of knowledge or culture; it
is not the extension of technical knowledge; it is not the act of depositing information or facts
in the students; it is not the perpetuation of the values of a given culture” (FREIRE, 2006, p.
78, our translation), but it needs to “be the deepening of the awareness that operates in men
and women while they act, while they work” (FREIRE, 2006, p. 76, our translation).

If we consider education as a practice of freedom, in which the act of knowing does
not end with the knowable object, but moves in the direction of transforming itself into social
practices for coping with dehumanizing experiences, which assumes higher levels of new
ways of thinking and acting in the world-reality, the possession of already known knowledge
is not enough, but its construction and reconstruction must be carried out, in the dialectical
relationship man/world/human in the sense of praxis. That is, the act of knowing has the
meaning of experiencing, experimenting, conceptualizing and gaining awareness both in the
dimension of the communicative task, as well as in the technical-productive, scientific-
practical and transforming historical-political dimensions.

As a communicative task, knowledge takes place in the intersubjective relationship
between subjects, regarding the knowable object, in the relationship of understanding,
intelligibility and dialogue, expressing itself through the same system of linguistic signs, that
is, “[...] the intelligible is only communicated to the extent that it is communicable” (FREIRE,
2006, p. 68-69, our translation). Freire's view is that the subjects, having the same intention,
in the search for knowledge about the object of their thinking and knowledge, communicate
their content.

On the contrary, while the meaning of the knowable object is not comprehensible and
is not apprehended at the level of expression, for both subjects, there is no scope for
knowledge as a dialogical search for the signification of the meanings of the knowable world.
School knowledge is something that has meaning and sense and, in this case, the learning
process means change, the transformation of subjects who communicate dialogically. This, in
turn, is done with the mediation of a reality, which must be pronounced in created acts,
motivated by the necessity of its own existence.

Gutiérrez (1988), when referring to education as a dialogical communication process,
sustains that the one who communicates, coding reality, learns as much as the one who
decodes, who, when carrying out this operation, also has the experience of learning this same
reality, since it is a process that is carried out in co-participation, co-production, co-understanding and communion.

In its *technical-productive dimension*, knowledge makes work or experimental activity, within the scope of everyday practice, the first formation of subjects of themselves, the first form of dialectical mediation between man and nature and nature with other men and women, thus, acting and reflecting on the implications of the techniques of their activity, build a critical awareness of themselves and the world, while they act and work (FREIRE, 2006).

With respect to the knowledge present within the scope of activities linked to the *scientific-practical dimension*, it gains, in this case, the contours of a science and, as such, needs to be problematized. Thus, the production of knowledge, having reality as a knowable object as its material base, has, in problematization, one of the fundamental forms for its apprehension, given that “[...] no thinker, like no scientist, elaborated his thought or systematized his scientific knowledge without having been problematized, challenged, as a fundamental condition for the constitution of knowledge” (FREIRE, 2006, p. 52, our translation).

Thus, working with knowledge in its *scientific-practical dimension* as one of the forms of knowledge production is a process of critical and rigorous reflection on “[...] knowledge in its indisputable relationship with the concrete reality in which it is generated and on which it focuses, to better understand it, explain it, transform it” (FREIRE, 2006, p. 52, our translation). From this perspective comes the fact that the student, as an experimental scientist, is also a worker, a professional, whose thinking and whose ideas are continually verified by practice – and vice versa – until they become a theory and practice unit.

As for the *historical-political and transforming dimension*, according to Freire (2006), its insertion in time and its instrumentality are related to *human affairs*, to life. This dimension mediates between local histories and the global context, in which oppressed groups, in seeking liberation, create a way of acting and thinking and, therefore, a new worldview, resulting in a new philosophy creator of the bases for a new model of society.

Based on these considerations, we can analyze that, in Freire's thinking, the ontological sense of knowledge, as expressed in these dimensions, constitutes the physical and human reality (objective and subjective), built (and under construction) in the most different forms, conditions and languages that reflect the way subjects establish relationships with the world and nature (FREIRE, 1987). Its social function is to develop the potential of students, who seek, with the means at their disposal, to develop an understanding
of the world, both in a global sense and in the sense of the set of existing actions within the context in which they live, aiming at the construction of an alternative project of society.

This onto-epistemological perspective is intertwined with the epistemological act, which is, in itself, a pedagogical and/or curricular act. In this way, the apprehension of curricular knowledge is a process that is present in the human movement of being and acting in reality, therefore, more than a product of human action, it is a social construction, a phenomenon in constant movement, which constitutes itself as a pedagogical relationship, which requires, among other things, a problematizing education program, carried out within a theoretical-practical context and conducted by an authentic dialogue of critical reflection.

The problematization, strictly speaking, aims at the emancipation of students from their oppressive historical conditions, and is opposed to “banking” education, which maintains the naivety of students. This understanding of problematization,

... responding to the essence of the being of consciousness, which is its intentionality, it denies communication and the existence of communication. It is identified with what is proper to consciousness, which is always being aware of, not only when it intends towards objects, but also when it turns on itself (FREIRE, 1987, p. 67, author's emphasis, our translation).

In this way, problematization is a methodological process, therefore, pedagogical, which allows the individual to know his reality, reflect on it and promote, on it, interventions, in a critical and creative way, at the same time in which he becomes a critical subject and politicized. It is a process that takes place through coding and decoding of reality. Coding, being “[...] such an existential situation or an existential situation constructed by the students”, is “[...] a knowable object that mediates the knowing subjects” (FREIRE, 2001, p. 36, our translation). Decoding – as a composition “of the code into its constituent elements – is the operation by which knowledgeable subjects perceive the relationships between the elements of the codification and between the facts that the real situation presents and the relationships that were not perceived before” (FREIRE, 2001, p. 36, our translation).

Understood in this way, it is important to say that the act of knowing involves a dialectical movement that goes from action to reflection on reality and, from this to a new action. Such a dynamic that constitutes a path in which the student, engaging in the process of abstraction, both from the forms of “orientation in the world” and from situations (codifications) representative of the way in which he or she orientates themselves in the world on a daily basis, are challenged by the educators to analyze them critically. In this perspective, Freire states (2001, p. 42, our translation):
Problematizing education is based on creativity and encourages true action and reflection on reality, thus responding to the vocation of men who are not authentic beings unless they are committed to creative search and transformation.

In the path of this methodological path for the apprehension of knowledge, two contexts are fundamental, according to Freire's perspective: the concrete and the theoretical. The concrete context refers to the social reality in which the facts occur and in which the students find themselves (FREIRE, 2001). The theoretical context concerns the authentic dialogue between educators and students as subjects of knowledge. Operationally, the practical context means the real locus from which the concrete data (knowable object) is taken to submit it to the theoretical context, so that it is critically reflected. The perspective is to guarantee the consciousness-world dialectic, which leads us to the fact that the world – the sociocultural consciousness – is formed intersubjectively and, therefore, historically, resulting from human activity itself in permanent sociocultural interaction, in communicability. According to Freire (2006, p. 65, our translation), "[...] the social and human world would not exist as such, if it weren't for a world of communicability outside which it is impossible to give human knowledge".

The theoretical context means the process of objectifying reality and also the intentionality of consciousness, elements that drive us to acquire a critical capacity for reflection and re-signification of the worldview built by the reason for the facts. It is in this context that the decoding of reality takes place, a concept that can be understood as the act of knowing the object of reality, in a relationship of authentic dialogue between educator and student. It is a process that takes place through exercises committed, on the one hand, to clarifying the relationships of human beings with their world and, on the other, to clarify both the products that human beings create when transforming the world, as well as the conditioning that these products exert on human beings themselves, and also the role of practice in the constitution of knowledge (FREIRE, 2007). The effort undertaken in this process consists of moving from doxa to logos, that is, from merely sensible perception to reach the intelligibility of reality.

The apprehension of knowledge, as postulated by Freire's conception, takes place in a reality that presents itself both in the subject-object-subject relationship – the locus of objects and perceptions, admiration and abstractions – and as the locus of the subjects' relationship in co-participation in the act of knowing the object. Regarding this practice of co-participation, it is known as a communication activity and is placed as the foundation of life in society and the production of valid human meaning.
In summary, the process of problematizing education as a gnosiological action, that is, as an act of apprehending knowledge, is carried out in the instigation of new phases of knowledge, having as support the world and life in concrete existence. The implication of this knowledge in the school curriculum is the possibility of re-elaborating the world view, in a critical and rigorous way, capable of leading students to perceive, throughout their education, more precisely in their school, professional and daily experience, the meaning of knowledge as a permanent search. In the words of Freire (2006, p. 54, our translation):

[…] if scientific knowledge and the elaboration of a rigorous thought cannot do without its problematizing matrix, the apprehension of this scientific knowledge and the rigor of this philosophical thought cannot also do without the questioning that must be done around knowledge itself that the learner must incorporate.

Thus, it appears that problematizing education, with a view to overcoming the contradiction between educator and student, affirms dialogicity and critical reflection, mediated by the world, with a view to pronouncing it, transforming it, creating it, and recreating it in a solidary way, in a work of reflection, collaboration, co-participation and in a way in which they gain meanings, “they exist” as subjects (FREIRE, 1987).

Finally, school knowledge, in the critical sense of humanization, is what values students as subjects in their potential: historical (identifying with their own action, the individual temporalizes his life in acts); ethical-political (because it makes choices, options and actions); and cultural, understood here, in Freire's maxim, “[…] as an acquisition of human experience” (FREIRE, 2010, p. 109, our translation).

**Final considerations**

The discussions in this article aimed to analyze the less evident dimensions about the meanings of knowledge that is programmed by the curricular educational policies aimed at the Brazilian public school of basic education. The reflections undertaken from the legal documents, more precisely the BNCC, approved in 2017, and the Common National Base for Basic Education Teacher Formation (BRASIL, 2019), authorize us to affirm that the meanings of knowledge reinforce the pragmatic character and reductionist approach to the curriculum and student formation and, consequently, induces teacher formation to return to a competence-based formation model, which reflects a pedagogical logic of education suppressed from the set of fundamental knowledge for broader professional development.
Against this proposal, we point out, as an alternative to thinking about the school curriculum, knowledge in a critical sense at the service of the humanization process, idealized in Freire's thinking.

Paulo Freire's understanding of knowledge in the school curriculum is increasingly important in the current historical context of school education. This happens in terms of its social role, in a critical sense of humanization, in relation to the complex socio-historical, cultural and political conditions that we live in in Brazil, especially when it comes to the formative model assumed in curricular settings, whose axiom is that each and every educational process only makes sense and has quality if it meets the services demanded by the labor market, in view of social and economic development.

While the concept of knowledge, from the economicist neoliberal point of view, asserts itself as a production factor and evidences a formation reduced to skills and abilities for future employability, the understanding of knowledge in Freire's thinking elucidates the possibilities that human beings have to go through of the conditions of passive adaptation in the world to transform it, as he becomes critically aware of it and re-elaborates it. This process, which takes place through knowledge in the school curriculum, presents itself as a theoretical-practical unit, that is, as a social force of reading and intentional transformation of the historical and social reality, in which the individual is inserted and in which becomes a subject, not an object.

In this direction, the lack of access to knowledge in the school curriculum, from the critical point of view of humanization, makes it impossible for the school to develop a project of counter-hegemonic education for students from the popular classes and also makes it impossible for workers to humanize themselves, to appropriate their social and historical reality in a critical way, above all, in the advanced moment of capitalist society, marked by the advance of certain conservatisms, a context that demands, more and more, that the hegemonic struggle does not happen only at the economic and political levels, but, substantially in the cultural sphere.

Thus, knowledge in the school curriculum, in a critical sense of humanization, assumes decisive importance in the process of the popular classes freeing themselves from the oppression of the old narratives of the ruling classes and rising from the conditions of silencing. Knowledge has an educational function not only in the instrumental form, in which indispensable skills are affirmed and developed for the future employability of students, but also as a social force and an instrument to enable the process of humanization and overcoming...
the condition of subjects oppressed and silenced, so that a new and higher form of social praxis can be achieved, in view of a democratic, fair and citizen society.

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